

John Campbell has shaved off the "mourning beard" he'd been growing since the Democrat landslide Nov. 4. Not that the Republican congressman from Irvine is done mourning—he decries a lack of bipartisanship among politicians in dealing with the recession. But Campbell—a CPA, member of both the House Budget and Financial Services Committees and a free thinker on the financial crisis—is a go-to guy for Fox, CNBC and other media.

"I've been doing a lot of television, and getting a lot of feedback from viewers, constituents, 'What's that (beard) about?'" Unlike many other House conservatives, Campbell voted for the bank bailout, has opined against Chapter 11 bankruptcy for GM and gets along well with Barney Frank; but he also opposed the Obama stimulus package. Campbell used to own several car dealerships (Saab, Saturn, Ford, Nissan, Mazda) but predicts, "In six months, all but one dealership I started will be out of business." He's pushing a bill (he says the idea came from a constituent) for a capital-gains-tax holiday to stimulate investment: Homes, stocks, bonds, businesses and other assets purchased during a period of six months or so would never be subject to the tax. The bill has "some traction," but there's been no comment from the president. Meanwhile, Campbell said on "Inside OC" that he opposes the Schwarzenegger-backed propositions on the May ballot; he says they perpetuate the unions' stranglehold on the state budget. He would take "seriously" a challenge in 2010 from Democratic Irvine Councilwoman Beth Krom, despite his district's GOP tilt: "She has a name, a title and a support base." And Campbell says he's not only recovered from the intestinal surgery he had in February at Mayo Clinic, but feels "120% better"...